Kinship is very important in Australia and is the chief factor underlying social organisation and behaviour both between individuals and between groups. Every individual is born into a kinship pattern which under the classificatory system defines his relationship not only with his own kin but also with all those whom he meets during the ordinary course of his life. Kinship terms, or terms of relationship, are used in place of personal names. They are not mere terms of address, for each carries a set pattern of behaviour. 602

Mälla, in literal translation, any *group*, but used also in a special sense for an aggregation of clans linked together by the possession of common totems or by the sharing of at least a part of a common totemic inheritance. 614 615

Moiety (see dual division).

Patrilineal. Descent in clan and in certain other social groups is traced either in the male or in the female line, i.e. through the father or through the mother. When reckoned through the father it is *patrilineal* and when traced through the mother it is said to be *matrilineal*. 000

Totems and totemism. A totem has been defined as an animal, plant or inanimate object, with which a person, or a group of people, believe that they have a special relationship. This is true, but it does not go far enough. Many different kinds of totemism are known in Australia, including clan, moiety, conceptional, personal, cult and ceremonial totemism. In all, a very special relationship exists between the individual or the group and its totem or totems. Often, in clan totemism, the people believe that they are descended from one of the totemic ancestors of their clan and that these ancestors, called *wägarr in* Eastern Arnhem Land, founded the clan and its culture and way of life and established the traditions which the people follow today. 779 ●

Tribe. In Australia the tribe is merely a linguistic unit, a group of people often very loosely united by the possession of a common language, and whose component clans occupy a certain definite territory. It is certainly not the most important unit of social life. It is not the land-owning group, the law-making or war-making group and has no political autonomy. Tribal organisation is conspicuous by its absence from most of Eastern Arnhem Land, although normal tribal organisation occurs at Groote Eylandt, at Bennet Bay and on the southern boundary of the territory, along the Roper River, as well as from the vicinity of Cape Stewart westwards. [197] 619 [184]

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they also possess rituals and myths in common, and in many cases, obvious dialects of one language.

Each of these groups is a patrilineal clan, the members (apart from the wives of the men), being all related in the male line; a social group consists of a man and his brothers and sisters, his children, his son's children, his brother's children and such like. Members of such a clan must never marry one another, but only members of other clans, according to the kinship rules. This rule is called local exogamy. The members of the local clan, together with their wives who have come to live with them (as is the custom), are called a horde.

The most important feature of the local clan is the link which binds its members to one or more sacred totemic waterholes (or wells) in the clan country. The well was formed by the cult totemic hero and ancestor of the clan. In it have sojourned from the great ancestral time the spirits of all those whose earthly course is run, that is, the souls of the dead. Also associated with the well are the clan's totemic emblems and ceremonies. One important function of the latter is the maintenance of the regular order of the dry and wet seasons, and the link with the creative epoch of the totem. Incidentally the souls of the dead may take up their abode, not only in the well, but also in the totemic emblems, and are believed to be present at the great totemic ceremonies. In addition they are called upon to do their part in some rites, especially in connexion with burial. For example, in Chapter 14, Mr Chaseling refers to a deceased child's grandfather chanting a prayer to his own dead brother (that is, the child's 'tribal' grandfather), to come and take the child back to Buralkor, the Island of the Dead. But though a deceased person's spirit goes to this island, it returns to the totemic well in his clan's country. This may seem contradictory to us, but just as space and time were no obstacle to the great ancestresses who came from the island,

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so it is with man's spirit. Moreover, according to native psychology, a man has two souls, and according to some beliefs, it is a man's bush or trickster spirit which goes to the Island of the Dead. But however that be, the more important of these two spirits of the dead does sojourn in the totemic well, and to make sure that the spirit arrives there, signs are made by pointing and singing to the grandfather to come for him. As one informant told Dr Warner, who studied the subject intensively, 'if we didn't sing, he might go bad because evil ghosts might catch him and take him out in the jungle country where they live. It is better that his old grandfather and his ancestors come and get him and take him straight to his clan well where his totem came from.'

Religion

Readers of Mr Chaseling's book will be impressed by the important part played by religion in the life of the Aborigines. Mythology and ritual, totemism and beliefs regarding the spirit of man, the Great Creator Spirit who is revealed in the Rainbow Serpent, and the 'mother goddess', are all part of this religious life. The ritual is the prescribed acting of the great myths by fully initiated men; the mythology provides the sanction and pattern for the rites and for present-day behaviour. The emphasis on the Creator Spirit (associated with the sky) and a kind of 'earth-mother' distinguished Arnhem Land from Central Australian mythology, though interest in the sky-world and a belief that it is the source of life-giving powers (especially through the Rainbow Serpent and the medicine-men), were widespread in Australia. Mr Chaseling's Chapter 17 shows how the natives of his region are fascinated by the sky-world and in their mythology reveal a desire to go to it.

Further details of north-east Arnhem Land myth and ritual are given in W. L. Warner's *A Black Civilization*. He also discusses fully the totemism of the region. A general

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114 introduction to this fundamental aspect of aboriginal life is given in A. P. Elkin's *The Australian Aborigines: How to Understand Them.*

771 779 Totemism is fundamentally a complex of beliefs and attitudes based on a doctrine of oneness of life shared by nature and man. In other words, natural species and phenomena are brought into man's social order; that is, they are regarded as members of his local groups, clans, and moieties. Usually, too, a bond that is both social and religious is established between a group of men and women on the one hand and one or more natural species on the other. The latter are the totems of the former. In what is termed cult-society (or 'lodge') totemism, the totem is the symbol of the whole set of myth and ritual, which is the clan's link with, and door into, the 'eternal dream-time', the state and life of the great heroes, the ancestors, the spirits.

796 Mr Chaseling refers to many rites and beliefs which belong to the aboriginal religious world. Those connected with blood, described in Chapter 5, are especially interesting. We notice the taboo on eating food, because of the shedding [X2] of blood when obtaining it, or because of the presence of a corpse, and the rite for removing the taboo, which includes a 'totemic well', a sacred meal, and purification by fire. Another interesting rite is the singing of the myth of creation by the medicine-man as a cure (Chapter 10).

842 In Chapter 8, Mr Chaseling refers to the natives' belief regarding conception. The general reader may not be aware that in most regions of the continent, the Aborigines do not regard sexual intercourse as the cause of conception. Mr Chaseling says that was the case in north-east Arnhem Land, but that now, the view has been slightly modified; it is now held that intercourse is an act of preparation for, and an invitation to, the unborn spirit to enter the womb. This agrees with the findings of Spencer and Gillen and others for nearby regions. Dr Warner, however, came to the

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murulkurr' (referring to wives' mothers' brothers), and 601
'nguti walkurr' (wives' mothers' mothers' brothers). In all I traced over one hundred different relationships, of which only about one-third had English equivalents. Fortunately for us, modern society does not recognize the remainder, for some of them are involved and interminable—such as 'mumulkurr', who may be wives' maternal grandmothers, or grandmother's brothers' wives, or maternal uncles' wives' mothers.

There are several groups of loosely knit hordes in Arnhem 619
Land. In the west from Cape Don to the Liverpool River, thirty hordes are associated in common society, each speaking similar dialects, but, as a social group, having no intercourse other than that of a warlike nature with adjacent horde-groups. Again, immediately east of Cape Stewart, and extending to Blue Mud Bay, two hundred and fifty miles away, is the group of thirty-six hordes amongst whom I spent most of my time. A peculiarity of these large independent groups is that they are nameless, though occasionally reference may be made to 'island people' or 'mountain folk'. Yulengor from the Murungga Island horde are frequently called 'Murrnggin'. Hordes in the Gulf country call those in the west 'Meerwaitj', which means 'Where the sun goes down', and the Meerwaitj vaguely refer to the eastern Yulengor as 'Wornba' or 'Where the sun gets up'. These are only vague local references; the social group as a whole is nameless.

Throughout Arnhem Land many sacred trees, wells, 773
creeks, springs, reefs, and peculiar rocks, were visited by the 778
creative Ancestors, and here they performed important acts and instructed their children in their lore. Yams and digging-sticks, used first by the Ancestors, are linked to a [779]
totemic well where the earliest nomads were taught to dig for food, and at another creek the pandanus palm umbrella mat, 'Ngunmurra', was first introduced.

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YULENGOR

779 Totems in sacred ceremonies are known as 'maraian', and generally denote some utensil used by the Ancestors. Maraian may also be birds, animals, or fish intimately linked with the Ancestors. Parts of the nomad's anatomy, representing that of an Ancestor, and usually their reproductive organs, feature in song and dance. Such caricatures are accepted by the nomads, but I have seen consternation and embarrassment amongst mixed parties of white visitors attending these ceremonies.

779 796 614 621 778 Totemic beliefs link widely separated hordes, who meet for ceremonies connected with the creation myth, for bone-burying and for initiations. Several clans may be co-guardians of the same sacred site, such as the Reratjingo of Port Bradshaw and the Lia-gullomirry from the Woolen River, who are separated by about a hundred and fifty miles, yet both belong to the Dua moiety and have close connexions with a sacred well on the Woolen River where a great mythical snake in Creation days distinguished himself by swallowing two of the Ancestresses. Guardianship of this site has been mainly in the hands of the Woolen River horde, but at rare intervals Reratjingo men from Port Bradshaw make their way to the well and take part in the ceremonies. A sacred maraian, consisting of a painted hollow log, represents the snake, and is the centre of the rite, and at certain stages in the proceedings the leader blows through it to produce dull, booming reverberations which are said to be the voice of the snake. An old man of the visiting Reratjingo returned to Port Bradshaw, painted a [178] similar maraian, and introduced the ceremony to his horde; now his sons, grandsons, and nephews carry out the ritual of this totem.

778 531 Some designs and myths, painted on maraian in coloured clays, or bound with string and parrot feathers, involve weeks of careful preparation. A shower of rain will efface the paint, moths may consume the string; the horde leader

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must memorize the design. Blank spaces on maraian are due to the artist's loss of memory, and they freely admit that they have forgotten some parts of the design.

As well as having a link with the distant Woolen River, the Reratjingo had its own totem centre near Port Bradshaw, and were co-guardians with the Kalpu. But this did not guarantee unity, for the question of guardianship led to quarrels in which several were killed and the Reratjingo withdrawing to Melville Bay forty miles away. But the Kalpu victory was short lived, for in driving off the Reratjingo they so weakened the home-front, that their hereditary enemies, the Juppu of Blue Mud Bay, descended on them with such vindictiveness that the remnant fled to the English Company's Islands eighty miles away, and they have been on the defensive ever since.

Prolonged friendships between hordes does not prevent the sudden cessation of diplomatic relations, and an occasional killing. The Gerrkee from Cape Shield had fraternized, hunted, and camped for years with the Juppa. Though they were of opposite moieties, they exchanged secret law, held totemic dances, and seemed inseparable. Yet one night when I was visiting their camp I saw that they were at loggerheads, and soon afterwards they brandished their spears, attacked each other, yelling threats and obscenities. It all started at the end of a successful day's hunting, when everyone had more than enough to eat and a Juppa woman hit her Gerrkee husband with a digging-stick after a trivial disagreement. He retaliated by knocking her down and bumping her head on the ground. Her father heard her screams, and remonstrated with his son-in-law, who then called on his brothers for assistance. In a flash, both clans were in a fracas. Women used their digging-sticks, or lengths of wood from the camp-fires, and darted in amongst the men to deal their blows. Men slashed with yard-long flat spear-throwers. After an hour of bedlam,

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AN AVERAGE FAMILY

Yulengor at their evening meal

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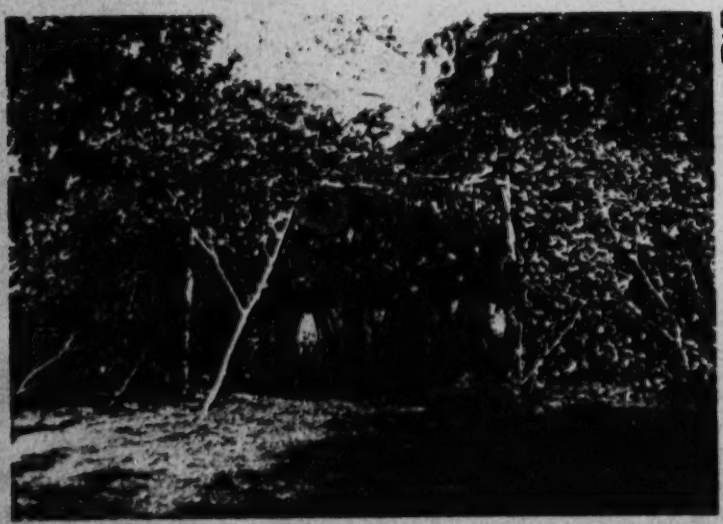

TOTEMIC DANCE

Yulengor carry the totem or marnian from its bush shelter

[facing p 86]

YULENGOR

*[773] [778] A goanna was among the many sacred totems in the canoe, and he fared better than the rest; he swam ashore and hid
●[779] in a lagoon. His lagoon is now an important totem centre, and the lesser-spirit, or mali, of the goanna guards it. As in many underground springs, the water occasionally bubbles up in the lagoon, and this is a sign that the goanna is moving
[562] below. No women are allowed near the totem, and if yams
[784] in the vicinity are eaten the results are fatal. Old men who remember the Macassars told me that when they attempted
[548] to make their trepang camps on the beach by the lagoon the Yulengor got rid of them by refusing to allow them to use the water or to gather firewood.

Restrictions are enforced on firewood in the area, because the goanna sent his mali into one of the trees growing by the spring. When the Junkgowa followed the goanna ashore, they were attracted by the singular beauty of this tree, for as
[825] well as the goanna-mali they saw a small red parrot in the
[531] branches. They declared that thereafter the feathers of this parrot were to be used in decorating totems of the Dua moiety. The tree was pronounced sacred; there are now
[824] many of them near the lagoon, and the tabu has been extended to them all.

*[773] [779] Totems, or 'rungga', floated ashore, and the Junkgowa hung them in the tree to dry. But when the pandanus palm armlets were washed up on the beach, they sprang to life and grew of their own accord, and the Junkgowa stripped them
[824] of their fronds and wove them into the first aboriginal armlets, dilly-bags, and nganmaras. These articles are in everyday use, but because the Junkgowa made them, they are also totems, and their story is preserved in the songs and ceremonies of the guardian horde.

Two other sacred centres were visited between Blue Mud
[778] Bay and Cape Arnhem, where the Junkgowa performed miracles and taught their children totemic secrets and dances.
[796] It is the record of these activities, some of them so trivial as

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to include natural body functions, that forms the basis of the nomads' ceremonial culture and is preserved in narrative-songs. At Port Bradshaw the Junkgowa made dilly-bags, yam sticks, feather belts, and armlets, and left two lots of children to guard the totems and multiply into the Kalpu and Reratjingo hordes. Today these warlike clans regard the site as their mutual totem centre, though they have nothing else in common. Ten children were born to the Junkgowa at Yallangbarra, but as they were sexless a further miracle was required to change them into normal beings. To do this the Ancestors carved ten effigies; they hid half of them in the long grass on the dunes and laid the remainder in a depression in the sand. Those in the grass grew beards and turned into males, as did five of the sexless children; those in the smooth sand remained smooth faced and exerted a similar influence on the remaining sexless children, who thereupon became females.

Loaded with totems, the Junkgowa turned westward and came to a large granite dome by the shores of Arnhem Bay where they left totems and the nuclei of hordes. This rock is now a totem and preserves the mali of a yam that was first planted beneath its shelter. Between Arnhem and Buckingham Bays a goanna was set free, and the art of making sacred yam sticks and dilly-bags was taught to children born and abandoned there. Fire also was introduced, and its mali was embodied in a totem.

Just how the nomad discovered fire remains a mystery, but today his fire-making is a simple though skilful art. Like the first Ancestors, the operator rests a short softwood stick on the ground, and sitting behind it he holds it firmly in place with his foot. In the upper surface of the softwood he bores a shallow hole and makes a small cut to form a channel in one side of it. A pointed hardwood stick is placed in the hole and twirled rapidly backwards and forwards between his palms so that the friction causes the softwood fibre to

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followed the sun till they stumbled on another lonely camp-fire.

Just where all these old Men came from is something of a mystery, for the Junkgowa were fated to find several more of them. Yulengor merely say that 'they lived there and grew up like grass'. They were semi-human, like the Junkgowa, but with the difference that the Women had come from the spirit-world and the Men were of the earth.

Eight pairs of children were born at Yaure-Yaurngor, and like all Junkgowa children they were fully developed at birth and able to care for themselves. Mangrove worms were created here, and the Junkgowa waded out on the mud-flats to show their children how to eat them. Worms, the colour of the surrounding mud, and as long as an arm, are drawn from mangrove roots, and without mastication they are allowed to slip slowly down the throat till the heads can be bitten off and discarded.

In those days Women were the guardians of ceremonial secrets, and their male children led a vague, indolent existence. But when the Ancestresses began preparing for the first of the great inter-tribal ceremonies, their sons became jealous. Consequently, when the Women hung their totems on a tree and went off at low tide to gather shellfish, one of their eight sons said: 'Let us take all these totems and make the Women gather our food.' Unanimous approval greeted the suggestion, so they collected the totems and took them into the scrub. Now, the Junkgowa were aware of the insurrection while they were still on the mud-flats, because every shellfish they picked up opened its mouth and told them the news. On their return to camp, their daughters confirmed their fears but could not help them beyond showing them the men's tracks leading into the bush. Following the tracks, the Junkgowa came to a clearing where the men were singing, but as they hurried forward to recover the totems they were overcome by the

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power of the men's ceremonial singing and dancing, and after the manner of women they were compelled to block their ears, to hide their faces and to run from the place. With unholy glee my informants recounted the rout of the Junkgowa Women, and added that they consoled themselves by saying: 'No matter, let the men keep the totems.' And men have guarded them ever since.

Having outstayed their usefulness at Yaure-Yaurngor, the Ancestresses were relieved to hear the beating of distant clap-sticks, and traced them to Elcho Island. They came to the western end of Cadell Strait, and seeing plenty of fish they tried to catch them, but only succeeded in injuring their hands. Until this time their hands were webbed and without fingers, but as they chased the fish and repeatedly struck their hands on the rocks the skin was broken and fingers were formed.

Elcho Island is an important totem centre in Arnhem Land, where self-created totems were in existence before the Junkgowa arrived. One of the peculiarly shaped totem-rocks embodies the mali of the 'shout' in the great Ngara ceremony. Others contain the mali of yam sticks, crabs, and palm mats. As these totems were being evolved they were attacked by swarms of sandflies and forced to retreat along the beach, till finally they wriggled into the sand for protection, and now only small parts of them project above the surface.

The Ancestresses made a long sand-bar totem, that they might cross to the island and endow it with the mali of their clap-sticks. On a nearby reef they dropped two large rocks to enshrine their own lesser-spirits. Another sun-totem was made on the beach, and like the one near Arnhem Bay it is beaten after heavy rain. In support of the custom, one of my guides remarked: 'Yes, Ngulprei's mother beat it last wet season to make the ground dry so she could go for yams at the other end of the island.' By the side of the sun-totem

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record the event. At high tide this rock is covered by sea water, and to this day it pours out a stream of fresh crystal-clear water.

A geologist might explain this Junkgowa miracle, by observing that the spring-water holds iron in solution, and that as it bubbles up, the surrounding sand is cemented and built into a crater. A similar structure in Arnhem Bay was put to use by Macassar traders, who wedged a hollow tree trunk into the neck of the spring. The fresh spring-water rose inside the tree, ran out along the hollow limb and into the fishermen's buckets brought alongside in their canoes. Though the salt water rose over the spring, the fresh water continued to flow from this improvised fountain.

Once the Elcho Island totems had been established, the Junkgowa parted company. The Men remained to guard the site, but the female Junkgowa had many totems and unborn children to distribute, so they crossed to the mainland. They followed the shores of Castlereagh Bay, placing the totems, establishing new hordes, creating peculiar rock formations, and making food areas. By the sea they made shallow marine plains, and on them planted sea-grass, and in these salt-water pastures they left turtle and dugong. Near the head of the bay the Women produced children in greater numbers, saying: 'We must go slowly up and down, leaving hordes and totems here, or we shall never get rid of them.' This accounts for the large number of hordes around Castlereagh Bay, which has the densest population in Arnhem Land. On a wide plain they planted clumps of jungle and allocated a separate jungle to each horde for its totem centre, and in each jungle a pair of children were born and told to inaugurate a horde.

By the low-lying shores of Castlereagh Bay the Women found salt-water plains, where they opened their dilly-bags to distribute totems, but found that they had already given away all those decorated with red feathers. Those remaining

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were adorned with clay, string, and fur, and in consequence this form of decoration is still used here, whereas to the east of Castlereagh Bay strikingly beautiful decorations are made with red and green parrot feathers.

Two old Men who were sitting by their fish traps, saw the Women, and said: 'What Women are these?' Self-consciously both Men and Junkgowa Women wound string round their waists and snatched green twigs for pubic shields. Later the Men invited the Women to share their camp: 'Come over here,' they said, 'we have plenty of fish.' As they approached the camp, the Women noticed that their Junkgowa dialect had undergone a subtle change, for they were unconsciously adopting the dialect of the fishermen. For many moons the Ancestresses ate fish from the fish traps, which are still a pronounced feature in aboriginal life on the salt plains. They taught the Men new songs and dances and sent out their offspring with totems and stone implements to found hordes. But beckoning smoke again rose in the west, and the Ancestresses left the Men to their fish traps.

From this point the account of their wanderings is vague, for they reached the borders of a new group of hordes which have their own creation myths, beliefs, customs, and language. Nevertheless, my informers emphatically asserted that, although these western 'foreigners' are self-contained and have no intercourse eastward, they were created by the Junkgowa. My guides had previously skirted the 'foreign' west country in canoes and pearling luggers, and when they noticed any features such as the sand dunes at Hall's Point and nearby food swamps they claimed them as the work of the Junkgowa.

Still farther to the west, some five hundred miles from their original landing at Port Bradshaw, the Women came to the open sea at Cape Don. They were perplexed by the sight of the sea barring their way, and scratched their heads, and threw the lice into the sea. But the lice

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Magic profoundly influences everyday beliefs and habits, and an ordinary nomad, as well as the witch-doctor, may set in operation magical powers.[1]

Prayer is offered to the spirits of the dead, and they are not only called on to receive departing human spirits, but in time of sickness, a man will call on the waterspout to carry his prayer to the spirits of his relatives.[2] A patient may also enter a totemic waterhole inhabited by a great mythical snake, which will effect the faith-cure.[3] Mythical serpents are called on for help, and receive prayers in time of acute danger and distress.

Makarola told me that he had been overtaken by darkness when returning with his family after a day's fishing. A strong wind arose and the canoe was blown out to sea, waves half-filled it, and whilst wives and children baled frantically in the darkness, he toiled to keep the dug-out into the wind. Makarola then remembered his totem and called on it for help. He said that in that instant he saw a 'bright light' which 'filled' his head. By the light he was assured that they would be brought safely to land, and when the wind abated, the family landed in an exhausted condition.

Though awe and fear weigh heavily in aboriginal religion, the nomad's religious outlook and practices are best summed up under the term 'Totemism'. Such totemism links man and nature and goes back to the ancestral creators of Junkgowa, who made the earth and its inhabitants, instituted present-day laws, habits and customs, and defined for all time the nomad's outlook and beliefs. Totemic beliefs and the record of their bestowal are preserved in the Ngara ceremonies, which are linked with the totem centres where the hero-Ancestors performed their mighty deeds. Behind the supernatural Ancestors, and beyond the present world, is the spirit-land of Buralkor, from whence they came.

[1] Chapter 13, 'Black Magic.'
[2] Chapter 10, 'Medicine-Men and Magic.'
[3] *Ibid.*

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Buralkor is also inhabited by the sun and her child, and by departed human spirits and Wangarr. 775

Wangarr is the eternal, indefinite, impersonal power behind creation and all life. He is impersonal, yet benign. He sent the Junkgowa to the earth, and through their totem centres he is now in touch with men. Being impersonal, there is no suggestion of his being placated, and eventually both the evil and the good go to Buralkor to dwell with him in the spirit-land. 776 [775]

Unusual happenings are glibly attributed to Wangarr, and his name is constantly on the lips of nomads. To Maulin and his horde, the entire headland and the islands off Port Bradshaw had always been a totem centre, for here the ancestral Junkgowa had performed their miracles; the application of the vague 'Wangarr' to any part of the area indicates that it is linked to the spirit-world. Maulin and his sons visited their totem centre near Port Bradshaw shortly after a cyclonic disturbance, and on a reef near an island they saw a new rock that had been thrown up in the storm. No such simple explanation came to their minds, however, for Maulin casually remarked, 'Oh, Wangarr,' and his explanation satisfied everyone. In the course of time a horde from the south wandered in to fraternize and to bring news concerning a raid that had taken place below Blue Mud Bay, in which a woman and her child had been killed. 'Yes,' Maulin nonchalantly remarked, 'we knew something untoward had happened, because we saw a new rock standing on the reef and realized that Wangarr had something to do with it. It must have been put there by the spirits of the woman and her child to show us that they had been killed.' 779 [775]

It is impossible to determine just where lies the line of demarcation between Wangarr and the activities of departed human spirits. Nor is it necessary to make such distinction, for the term Wangarr includes them all, the Great Spirit, creative Junkgowa sent forth by him, the 776 775